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The President's Daily Brief

January 23, 1976

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~~Top Secret~~ 25X1

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LEBANON

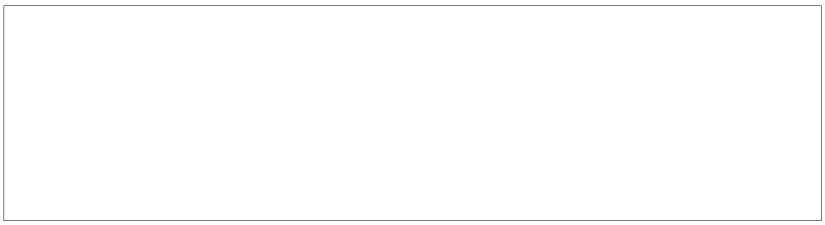
Fighting has diminished in most parts of the country since the newly created Syrian-Lebanese-Palestinian "peace commission" called yesterday for a cease-fire.

Fedayeen forces have been ordered to halt all attacks on government troops and installations. A Christian spokesman said the large Phalanges Party militia would respect the truce.

Leaders of the warring parties reportedly have agreed to separate their forces and take down barricades over the next four to seven days while political negotiations proceed. The aim is to avoid this time another sterile debate between Christians insisting peace come before political reforms, and Muslims demanding reforms come before peace.

President Franjiyah is still trying to elicit wide Christian backing for a comprehensive political settlement. He could easily slip back into a less conciliatory position. For now, Franjiyah apparently is convinced that, by making modest concessions, the Christians can forestall a more serious erosion of their power later.

The US embassy reports that Christian leaders are negotiating seriously for the first time, but doubts that Franjiyah can bring around the two main Christian political leaders--Interior Minister Shamun and Pierre Jumayyil. 25X1



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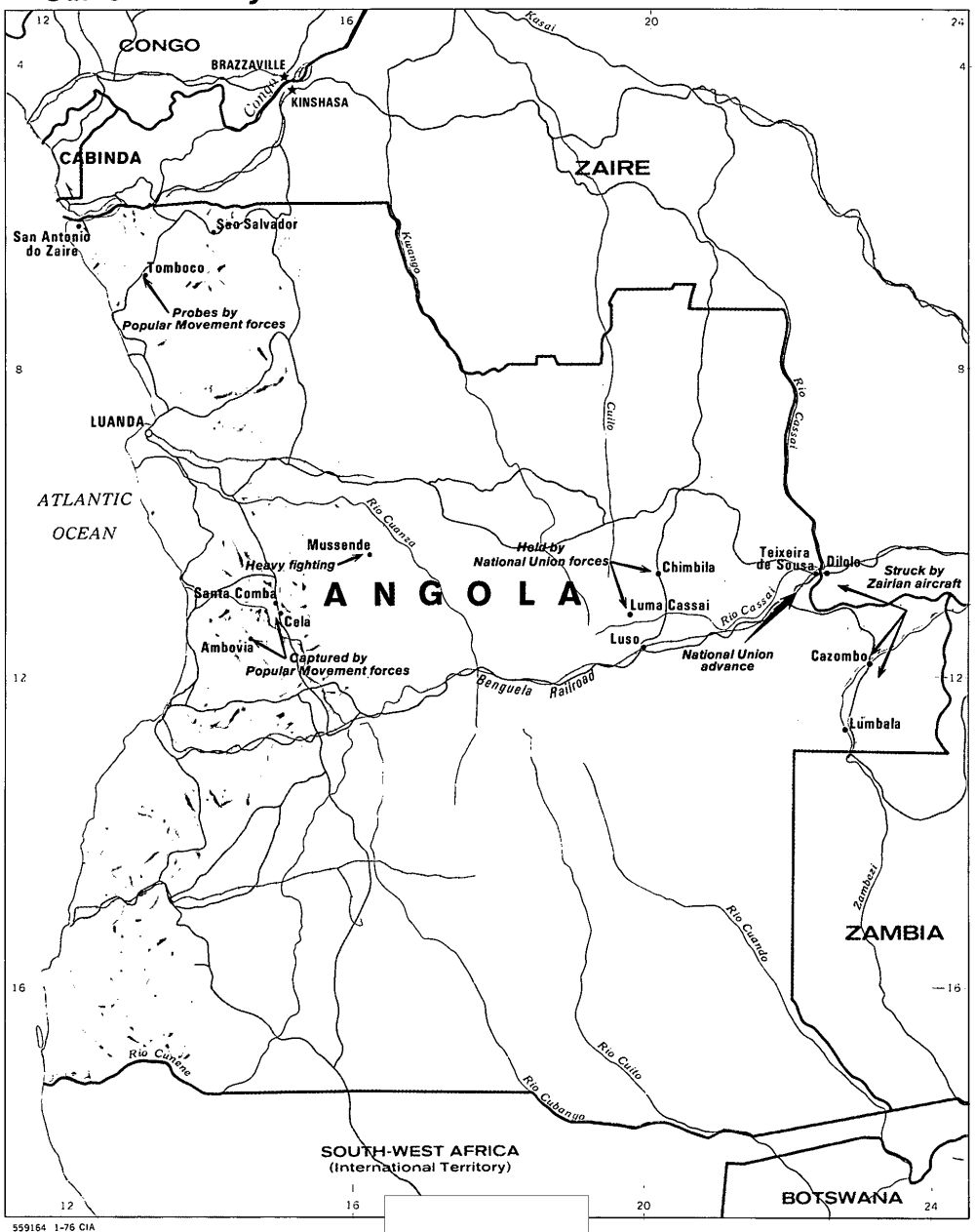
Current Military Situation



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ANGOLA

The Popular Movement has captured three towns in central Angola--Santa Comba, Amboiva, and Cela--according to intercepts. Heavy fighting is also taking place around Mussende.

National Union forces [redacted] in counter actions are moving northward from Luso in an effort to distract Popular Movement forces from an advance by the National Union on Teixeira de Sousa. [redacted] 25X1 25X1 25X1 25X1 25X1

Zairian jet fighters attacked Popular Movement forces twice in the past week. They hit the military camps at Lumbala and Cazombo and carried out a series of strikes around Teixeira de Sousa, reportedly destroying the runway and a missile-launching emplacement.

Ground forces of the Popular Movement have exchanged fire across the border with Zairian troops on several occasions this month. Tensions have been steadily rising on both sides of the border since the Popular Movement destroyed the bridge linking Teixeira de Sousa with Dilolo on the Zairian side of the Cassai River early this month.

[redacted] 25X1

Many foreign observers [redacted] no longer regard the National Front as an effective nationalist group. African leaders will probably view its collapse as an opportunity to revive pressures for a coalition between the Popular Movement and the National Union. 25X1

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Meanwhile, it is now apparent that the Soviet landing ship operating in West African waters did not leave the Gulf of Guinea for Conakry as we had believed.

the LST remained in the Gulf of Guinea and currently is about 500 miles to the west of Pointe Noire. There are five Soviet ships at Conakry--a cruiser, a destroyer, and three oilers.

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The status of Soviet ships in the Mediterranean remains unchanged.

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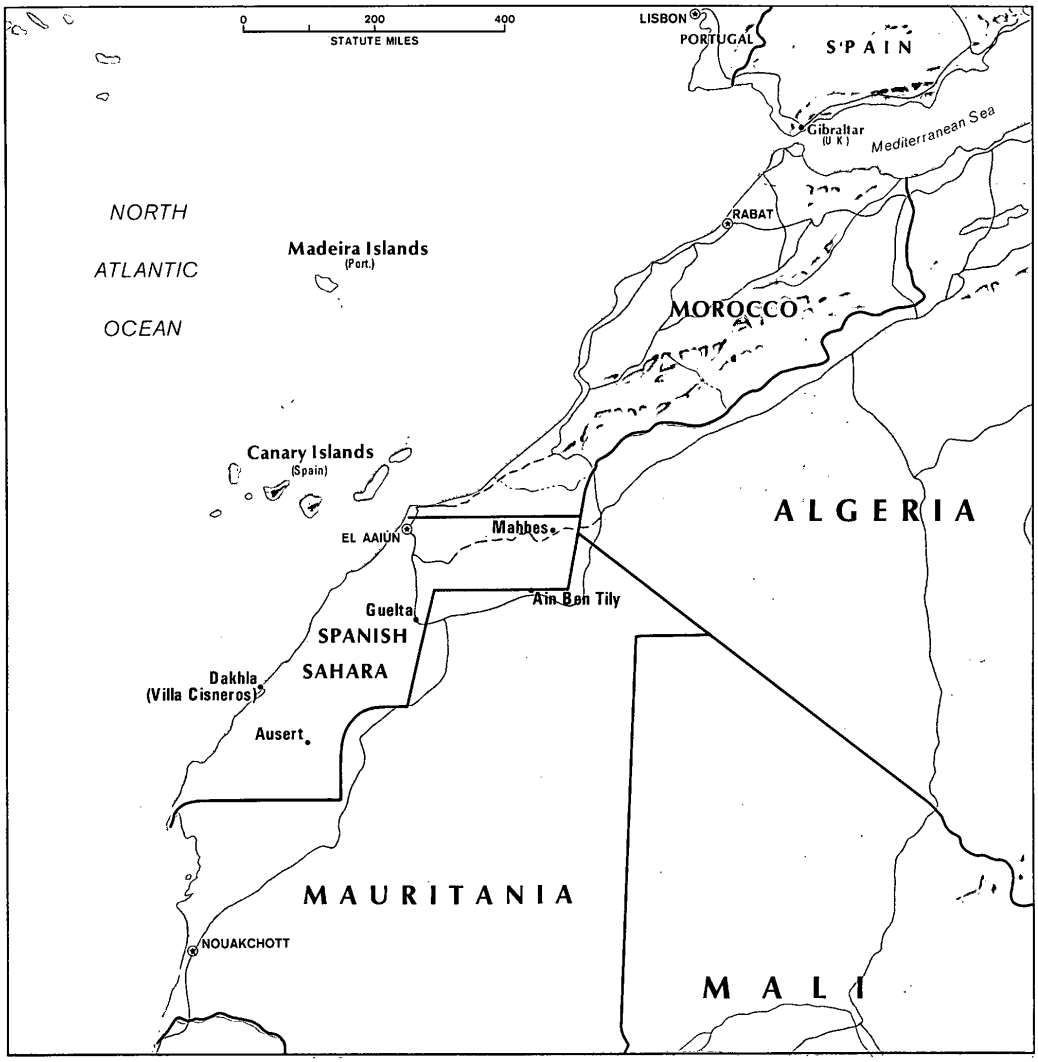

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NOTES

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Moroccan

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Icelandic *Prime Minister Hallgrimsson arrives in London Sunday for two days of talks with* British *Prime Minister Wilson.*

Despite the resumption of talks, Icelandic harassment of British trawlers remains a threat and could force London to order its frigates back into the disputed zone. London withdrew the frigates earlier this week on the assumption that Reykjavik would not harass the trawlers. Hallgrimsson has told newsmen that Iceland will continue to enforce its laws

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(continued)

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The Panama government's widespread crackdown on opponents is an effort to stifle domestic criticism and allow President Torrijos to negotiate a canal treaty without political harassment.

As many as 140 people may have been arrested, and at least ten prominent individuals were exiled. The government probably moved [redacted] because of extreme sensitivity to public criticism of its economic policies and its negotiating stance on a canal treaty. Unless the opposition gets a martyr or a groundswell of labor support develops, the right will not be able to threaten Torrijos seriously.

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* * *

Italy's Aldo Moro reportedly will ask the Socialist Party today to join his Christian Democrats in forming a coalition government.

If the two parties fail to reach an agreement, an early parliamentary election will be more likely than at any time since Moro began his search for a new government early this month. Most other options have been ruled out. There are major obstacles, however, to a Christian Democratic - Socialist coalition. The Christian Democrats reportedly are ready to accept most of the Socialist demands on economic policy, but they still cannot accept the other Socialist condition--more open consultations between the government and the Communists.

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